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ORGANIZATION.

BY

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President World's Fair Commission of the North-American Turner-Bund

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By **CHARLES BARY,**

President World's Fair Commission of the North-American Turner-Bund.

Organization is the frame-work through which principles find concrete expression. This is true no less of societies than in the body politic, the United States government itself being a vast system or organization. While organization supposedly is but the mere form, it is inseparable from the organization, which latter imprints on it its characteristics. Thus, the organizations, or governments, if despotisms, are centralized, the residium of arbitrary power being vested in the ruler; whereas that of constitutional monarchies and of democratic republics is decentralized. Of European countries Russia is an illustration of the one, Switzerland of the other.

Not unfrequently, however, it happens that through degeneracy of the dynasty and impotency of the ruler the centralized organization becomes a paper one, and like ancient Persia in the days of her satrapies becomes "a rope of sand," awaiting only external pressure to succumb; or like France on the eve of her great revolution, whose government, steeped in crime and vice, yielded to the rise of the people.

It is, therefore, patent, that organization is one of the most potent factors in the social as well as political fabric. The secret of success depends largely on the nature of the organization. If too much centralized, it results in one-man-power, which is always doomed; if, on the other hand, too lax, it results in the chaos of the Polish diet of liberum veto. In a democratic republic, like ours, organizations should combine centralization with the referendum.

The North-American Turner-Bund (North-American Gymnastic Union) is conceived in the spirit of progress and true Americanism, and its organization is in harmony therewith ; indeed, no less than to its declaration of principles, does the Bund owe its great success to its excellent organization, which, while it vests considerable of power and responsibility in individuals, provides for checks by means of that true democracy, the referendum. A more minute description of its organization is of interest to non-Turners as presenting to them a model worth copying, and of principles deserving to be emulated.

The North-American Turner-Bund is a confederation of some three hundred Turner societies, located in every state in the Union. The supreme legislative and judical powers are vested in the National Convention (Bundes-Tagsatzung), which convenes bi-annually ; the supreme executive power residing in the National Executive Board (Bundes-Vorort), which is in permanent session. The societies located in and about a center of population are comprised in a district (Bezirk), and are given jurisdiction for such territory, subject to appeal to the Bundes-Tagsatzung.

Modeled after the national organization as to distribution of powers, the supreme (district) legislative and judical powers are vested in the District Convention (Bezirks-Tagsatzung), and the executive, subject to appeal to the Bezirks-Tagsatzung, in the District Executive Board (Bezirks-Vorort), the latter being in permanent session during the recess of the annual Bezirks-Tagsatzung. All powers not expressly reserved to the Bund (national organization) and the Bezirk (district organization) are exercised by the society (Turnverein), which, however, are embodied in the constitution of the Turn-Verein, in like manner as the powers of the Bund and the Bezirk are expressed in the Bundes- and the Bezirks-constitutions respectively. And each Turnverein has an Executive Board (Vorstand), which sustains the same relation to the Turn-Verein as the Bezirks-Vorort and the Bundes-Vorort do to their respective Tagsatzungen. Only that the Turn-Verein usually has weekly meetings, though some have semi-monthly, or even monthly meetings.

BUNDES-TAGSATZUNG.

All the powers of the North-American Turner-Bund, national, district and local, legislative, judical, and executive, are vested irrevocably in the Bundes-Tagsatzung with power of delegation. This includes the powers of a constitutional convention in adjusting declarations of principles (principielle Beschlüsse), and adopting, or amending, the national constitution, with which the district and society constitutions, and the acts of their respective bodies, must be in harmony. Besides this absolute power in all matters pertaining to legislature, and the powers of a constitutional convention, the Bundes-Tagsatzung is the National Supreme Court of the Bund to which an appeal lies from the very incipiency of a

controversy, whether relating to individual Turners, Turn-Vereine, Bezirke or Bundes-Vorort. Finally, besides governing its own deliberations, fixing the ratio of representation, the time and place of meeting of the next convention, the Bundes-Tagsatzung selects by majority vote the district to which it entrusts the Bundes-Vorort (National Executive Board). And it may in addition create Standing Committes, or Boards (Bundes-Commiteen), and give same instructions. Such committees, as also the Bundes-Vorort, are subject to the instructions of the Bundes-Tagsatzung and are required to report to the next.

The Bundes-Tagsatzung may, and not unfrequently does, submit acts contemplating a vital change to a vote (referendum) of all the Turn-Vereine (Societies), and if such proposition secures an affirmative two-thirds vote it becomes (Turner) law.

The delegates to the Bundes-Tagsatzung are chosen by Bezirke (districts) at the ratio of one to each and every hundred members within such Bezirke (districts). The delegates are elected at large in the various Bezirks-Tagsatzungen (district conventions), each Bezirks-Tagsatzung deciding the number of delegates (Bundes-Delegaten), who represent the Bezirk (district). As the number of Bundes-Delegaten elected is less than the votes to which such Bezirke are entitled, the number of votes each Bundes-Delegat is entitled to is obtained by dividing the number of votes by the number of Bundes delegates. Thus, if the St. Louis Bezirk, at the next Bundes-Tagsatzung, should be entitled to, say, fifty votes, and elected a delegation of ten, each would be entitled to cast five votes.

Nor need a Bundes-Delegat be a resident of the Bezirk which elects him, but like the practice in vogue in electing members of the German Reichstag, the French Chamber of Deputies and the British Parliament, a delegate may be elected for any district whether or not a resident thereof. The local societies of the city in which the Bundes-Tagsatzung is held are charged with the duties of arrangements for hall, quarter-master's, etc., etc. The First Speaker (President) of the Bundes-Vorort (National Executive-Board) opens the Bundes-Tagsatzung, and the Temporary Speaker (President) appoints committees on credentials and permanent organization, whereupon the permanent organization appoints the various standing committees to whom are referred all matters pertaining to their respective spheres and scopes. After the transaction of the business in accordance with the customs of the other conventions, the Bundes-Tagsatzung selects the Bezirk (district) to whom it entrusts the executive department during its own recess.

The changes in the national constitution and the declaration of principles (principiellen Beschlüsse) are at once printed and all Bezirke and Vereine are required to obtain copies thereof, in which they have to print their own Bezirks (district) and Vereins (societies) constitutions, so that each of the fifty thousand members becomes conversant with the laws of the national, district and society

organizations and able to live up to them and held strictly to account for the observanee of the same.

The proceedings are printed in pamphlet form and largely distributed, and the mandatory resolutions are executed by the Bundes-Vorort, who may, in case of emergency, at the request of five Bezirke call an extra Bundes-Tagsatzung.

BUNDES-VORORT.

(NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD.)

The Bezirk (district) selected by the Bundes-Tagsatzung as the Bundes-Vorort (National Executive Board), calls a special (extra) Bezirks-Tagsatzung (district convention) to select the fifteen members of the Bundes-Vorort, who in turn organize by the selection from among their members of a First Speaker (President), Second Speaker (Vice President), Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Chairmen of Technical, of Finance, of Mental Improvement (geistige Bestrebungen), of Judiciary (Klage-Saehen) Committee.

The Bundes-Vorort meets monthly or as often as it may decide. Besides carrying out the mandates of the Bundes-Tagsatzung, it acts for the same during the recess thereof, subject to appeal. It is the highest court of appeal in all matters of controversy; only in such as involve an interpretation of the national constitution, an appeal may be had to the Bundes-Tagsatzung. It is the custodian of all records and finances of the Bund, and, unless otherwise specifically ordered by the Bundes-Tagsatzung, the Bundes-Vorort has full power to appropriate the funds in the Treasury, as also the regular income, the amount per capita of which latter is designated by the Bundes-Tagsatzung.

Each of the Standing Committees of the Bundes-Vorort has charge of the special work within its scope throughout the Bund, subject, however, to the approval of the latter.

The Bundes-Vorort may appoint special committees or delegates to Bezirks (district) Committees, or persons, powers to act for same. The officers of the Bundes-Vorort are the officers to the Bund.

BEZIRKE.

(DISTRICTS.)

The societies within a certain territory, as prescribed by the Bundes-Tagsatzung, constitute a Turn-Bezirk (district). The name is usually that of the state or the largest city within such territory. For instance, the St. Louis, the Chicago, the Wisconsin, etc. Bezirke; sometimes states, rivers or coasts give the designations, as the Central Illinois, the Mississippi, the Pacific Bezirke.

The Bezirks-Tagsatzung (district convention) has the same powers over the Bezirk (district), as the Bundes-Tagsatzung has over the Bund: only, that the acts must be in harmony with those of

the Bundes-Tagsatzung, the Bundes-Vorort, the declaration of principles and the national constitution. Also, that wherein a constitutional question arises an appeal lies to the Bundes-Vorort and then to the Bundes-Tagsatzung.

The Bezirks-Tagsatzung adopts its own constitution, acts on finances, levies and collects (through their Executive Board) the taxes and special assessments, including those for the Bund; designates time and place of meeting of its conventions, and selects one of the societies as the Executive Board (Vorort) for the ensuing year. And in the year in which there is a Bundes-Tagsatzung, it elects the Bundes-Delegaten, designating their number and compensation, and giving same instructions in its discretion.

EXECUTIVE BOARD.

(BEZIRKS-VORORT.)

The Turn-Verein (society) chosen as the Bezirks-Vorort (District Executive Board) calls a special meeting of the Verein to elect the (usually nine) members of the Bezirks-Vorort, and then organizes by electing a First Speaker (President); a Second Speaker (Vice President); a Recording Secretary; a Corresponding Secretary; a Treasurer; a Turnwart (Instructor), who are the Bezirks (district) officers. The Bezirks-Vorort sustains to the Bezirk (district) the same relations as the Bundes-Vorort does to the Bund. It is the executive department of the Bezirk and acts during the recess of the Bezirks-Tagsatzung. In some Bezirks-Tagsatzungen special boards (Ausschüsse) are created, who report directly to the next Bezirks-Tagsatzung. The last Chicago Bezirks-Tagsatzung, for instance, created a Board for Mental Culture (Ausschuss für geistige Bestrebungen), a School Committee and an Amnesty Committee.

TURN-VEREIN.

(TURNER SOCIETY.)

A Turn-Verein (Turner-Society) comprises a membership all the way from thirty (30) to fifteen hundred (1500) members. Any person of good moral character may by an affirmative vote of a majority of those present be admitted, provided, he has made application previously, and a committee has reported favorably on him also that he either is a citizen of the U. S. or has taken out his first papers, and promises to obey the national (Bund), district (Bezirk) and society's (Vereins) constitution, rules and regulations.

Excepting the powers residing in the Bund, the Bezirk and their executives, the Verein has full power to act, to adopt its own constitution and by-laws, assess fees, expend moneys, manage property, or delegate powers to their Eexecutive Board (Vorstand), committees, or persons. They, also, elect, annually, the delegates (Bezirks-Delegaten) to the Bezirks-Tagsatzung, based on their membership,

on which, also, is based their taxes for the Bezirk and the Bund. Usually it is twenty (20) cents pro capita per annum for each.

The Turn-Verein elects its Vorstand (Executive Board) which usually consists of the officers and several trustees (Verwaltungs-Räthe).

The officers are: First Speaker (President); Second Speaker (Vice-President); Recording Secretary; Corresponding Secretary; Treasurer; Instructor (Turnwart), etc.

The relation of the Vorstand to the Verein is relatively the same as that of the Bezirks-Vorort to the Bezirks-Tagsatzung, and as that of the Bundes-Vorort to the Bundes-Tagsatzung.

A new society (Verein) may be admitted by having the same send in to the Bezirks-Vorort its list of membership, its constitution and three (3) dollars application fee. The Bezirks-Vorort passes on the constitution whether it is in harmony with that of the Bund and of the Bezirk, the list of membership is sent for investigation to the Verein in the neighborhood of the applicant-Verein, and if both are satisfactory the applicant is admitted into the Bund by the Bundes-Vorort.